



# Bio Energy | Geothermal Energy | Solar Energy | Water Energy | Wind Energy

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Editorial choice:

off

Media type:

Book

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0

Alternative energy? Who are they kidding? The wind has always dried our washing, the river taken our rafts downstream, the sun turned our grapes to raisins, Old Faithful has always spouted and firedamp always exploded. It's a strange reflection, then, that regards these basic and enduring energies as 'alternative' while new-found coal, gas and oil about whose dangers and dwindling we worry so incessantly are dubbed 'conventional'. But if you accept the name, Wayland's new 'Alternative Energy' series provides an excellent and up-to-date look at renewable power, its getting and using.

**Solar, Water and Wind** are relatively familiar territory, but Graham Rickard succeeds in beating new paths through it so that, aided by effective diagrams that are a feature of this series, we learn about turbine-driving solar chimneys, the principles of Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (usually obscure in other treatments) and the great variety of wind turbine designs.

**Bio** and **Geothermal** are the first monographs on their subjects accessible to the primary age range, which makes them even more valuable. In **Geothermal** the author looks at the heat beneath our feet - not just geothermal power stations but hot springs (which supply 80% of Reykjavik's domestic warmth), the curative thermal sands of Ibusuki, and the current hot dry rock experiments in Cornwall.

**Bio Energy** deals mainly with fuelwood, fuel alcohol from sugar, and methane from landfill and farm waste (four and a

half million digesters in China alone). The technology of biogas is particularly well shown, and it's interesting to find the world's biggest methane digester is in Puerto Rico, where it fires the Bacardi plant - as an alternative to coke, presumably.

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